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Curios and Relics

Weapons

Cannon

The Lincoln Gun

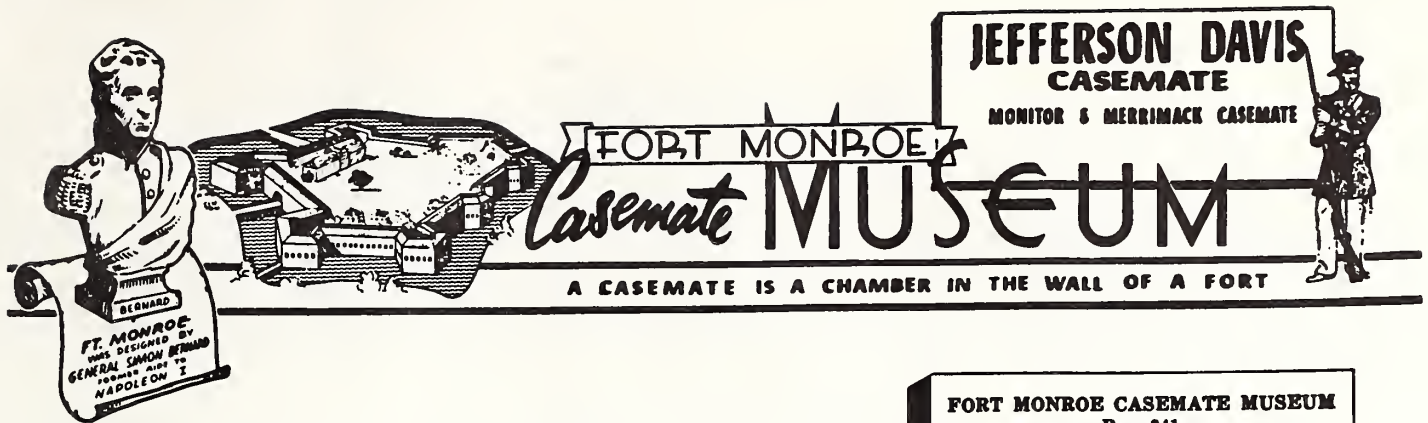
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FORT MONROE CASEMATE MUSEUM
Box 341
Fort Monroe, Virginia 23351

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ANNUAL REPORT 1969

"SO WIDE, SO LIGHT, SO BEAUTIFUL"

These were the words of one of the many visitors to the enlarged and remodeled CASEMATE MUSEUM. While the Museum may be said to have a "new look", it is more properly a new-old look, for the casemates have been restored as nearly as possible to the original appearance of 1834. The enclosed colored post card will convey a good idea of the changes that have been made. The work was begun in November 1968 and finished in May 1969. We are proud to say that during all this period some portion of the Museum was kept open. This transformation of the Museum was one of the many achievements of COLONEL HENRY L. GORDNER, Commanding Officer, Fort Monroe. All of the construction work, including heating and air-conditioning, was carried out by the Post Engineer, COLONEL STANFORD I. POLONSKY, and his staff of civilian employees.

The exhibits were expanded and reorganized by the Museum Curator with the aid of a dedicated volunteer, MRS. CLYDE T. EARNEST. Important assistance was also rendered by MRS. POLONSKY. LIEUTENANT COLONEL EARNEST and MRS. EARNEST sorted out and listed the books for our library. Indispensable help in setting up our office was received from FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIAM R. ROGERS, Post Information Officer. The inauguration of the expanded and improved Museum was celebrated with a ceremony on 2 June 1969. The guest speaker was PARKE ROUSE, JR., Executive Director, Jamestown Foundation. Among the out-of-town guests was TINY HUTTON, Administrative Assistant to CONGRESSMAN THOMAS N. DOWNING. Mr. Hutton is a long-time friend of the Museum and has often collaborated in our historical research.

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

COLONEL CHESTER S. SHRIVER of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Past Commander-in-Chief, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, became a member of our Honorary Committee. He succeeded the late and lamented MAJOR GENERAL U. S. GRANT, 3rd, grandson of President Grant. MR. LLOYD R. SORENSON, Vice President and General Manager, Retired, Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, also became an Honorary Committee member in place of the late John B. Woodward, Jr., whose death was so keenly felt by a host of friends and associates.

ILLUSTRIOUS SONS OF DOLE

GENERAL SIMON BERNARD (1779-1839), aide to the Emperor Napoleon and designer of Fort Monroe. LOUIS PASTEUR (1822-1895), world-famous scientist and benefactor of humanity. Both born in Dole. The house where General Bernard was born still stands at the corner of the rue Bernard and the rue Mont Roland. It was identified for us by MONSIEUR RENE ANDRE, Archivist of the city of Dole. The house where Pasteur was born is today a noted museum. A bulletin received from DR. JEAN PITON of Dole informs us that the Pasteur House has in recent months received some unusually distinguished visitors, among which were DR. ANDRE LWOFF, Nobel prize winner in medicine, DR. PASTEUR VALERY-RADOT, MRS. NESTA PAIN, former secretary to Sir Alexander Fleming, and MADEMOISELLE DENISE WROTNOWSKA, Curator of the Pasteur Museum in Paris.

MONSIEUR JACQUES DUHAMEL is an adopted son of Dole. Mayor of Dole and Deputy from the Department of the Jura, he has been since June 1969 Minister of Agriculture in the Cabinet of President Pompidou. A number of us had the pleasure of meeting this outstanding French statesman and his charming wife when they visited the Fort Monroe Casemate Museum in 1966. We are pleased to see his star in the ascendant.

COUNT ZEPPELIN'S AMERICAN BALLOON ASCENSION

Where did it take place? An article by RHODA R. GILMAN has definitely settled this long-mooted question. Entitled "Count Zeppelin and the American Atmosphere," her article appeared in THE SMITHSONIAN JOURNAL OF HISTORY, Spring 1968, pages 29-40. However, there was a delay in the publication of this number, and it did not come into our hands until 1969. Count Zeppelin described his experiences in a series of letters to his family from the United States. These are today in the possession of COUNT ALEXANDER VON BRANDENSTEIN-ZEPPELIN of Schloss Mittelbiberach, West Germany. Mrs. Gilman's article shows that the Count could not have made his balloon ascension during the Peninsular Campaign in 1862, because he did not land in this country until May 6, 1863, one year later.

He did not make an ascension in Northern Virginia in 1863, because by the time he reached the Army of the Potomac near Falmouth, Virginia, Thaddeus S. C. Lowe had resigned and the balloon corps had been disbanded. Zeppelin next decided to see something of the Middle West. At St. Paul, Minnesota, in August 1863, he met a German, John H. Steiner, who was making ascensions from a vacant lot across the street from Zeppelin's hotel. Steiner had served in 1862 as a member of Lowe's

balloon corps, but had quit because of delays in pay. He told Zeppelin of his idea for a cigar-shaped balloon that could be guided with a rudder. Zeppelin was sufficiently impressed to describe the idea in a letter to his father. Zeppelin made a fixed ascension with Steiner. After touring the Midwest the Count returned to the Eastern United States where he embarked on the French gunboat TISIPHONE to observe the Union operations against Charleston, South Carolina. On returning to New York, he departed for Europe on November 19, 1863. In 1915 Zeppelin told an American reporter, "While I was above St. Paul, I had my first idea of aerial navigation strongly impressed upon me."

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN C. EMMERSON, JR.

In the domain of historical writing the compiler is often the road builder. The historian can ride comfortably along the highway of facts, laboriously constructed by the compiler. And like the motorist who whizzes along the concrete highway, he may give scant thought to those who built that highway. We want to register a belated appreciation of the compilations of John C. Emmerson, Jr., P. O. Box 112, Portsmouth, Virginia 23705, which we have been using with profit for years. They are: THE STEAMBOAT COMES TO NORFOLK HARBOR 1815-1825 and STEAM NAVIGATION IN VIRGINIA AND NORTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA WATERS 1826-1836. Both of these paperback books are treasures of information laboriously culled by Mr. Emmerson from the Norfolk newspapers of the time. Do you want to know the details of Lafayette's visit to Norfolk and Fort Monroe in 1824? Read Emmerson's compilation. Do you want to know more about President Andrew Jackson's visits to Fort Monroe? Read Emmerson's compilation. The great of that day traveled by steamboat. Their every coming and going was trumpeted by the newspapers. The life of the Hampton Roads area in the early 19th century is reflected in the compilations of Mr. Emmerson. His chief reward has been the consciousness of an important work well performed. To this we want to add our heartfelt gratitude, for whatever it may be worth. Thank you, John C. Emmerson!

MORE HISTORICAL MARKERS FOR FORT MONROE

For a long time we felt the need of additional historical markers at Fort Monroe to interpret certain structures, sites and artifacts. Encouraged by COLONEL GORDNER'S interest in historical interpretation, we suggested the acquisition of five more markers. Our Commanding Officer readily concurred and in the spring of 1969 the following markers were acquired and erected: 1. THE OLD CISTERN. this picturesque structure in the wall of the West Bastion had long been a subject of speculation--some of it fantastic!--on the part of the passersby. No potable water has ever been found on Old Point Comfort. Cisterns were constructed to catch rain water. This is the only survivor of a number of cisterns shown on a map of 1834. * * * * * 2. LEE'S QUARTERS. Across the street from the Museum is Building No. 17, where Robert E. Lee resided while a lieutenant of Engineers at Fort Monroe 1831-1834. * * * * * 3. FLAGSTAFF BASTION. From this eminence one views the majestic panorama of Hampton Roads, Fort Wool and Chesapeake Bay, the scene of so many gigantic events in the past of our nation. * * * * *

4. THE LINCOLN GUN. Now slumbering under a live oak tree on the Parade Ground,

it once stood on the beach to guard the channel from Chesapeake Bay to Hampton Roads. The first 15-inch Rodman gun, it was brought to Fort Monroe for testing in 1860. Originally called the Floyd Gun, it was given its present name in 1862. * * * * * 5. THE ENGINEER WHARF. Constructed about 1818, this was for many years an important wharf. Jefferson Davis was landed here as a prisoner in May 1865. * * * * * It is believed that these five additional historical markers are serving a very useful function in interpreting our history to all concerned, the tourists who visit the post and the personnel of the post itself, both military and civilian.

"VICHY, REINE DES VILLES D'EAUX"

Our Curator made a brief visit to VICHY, a great French vacation resort. The famous medicinal springs (Vichy water) continue to attract health-seekers, but there are many who come merely to relax. Distractions range through opera, musical comedy, plays, symphony concerts, art exhibits, lectures, band concerts, festivals, discotheques, night clubs, swimming, boating, horse racing, and even bull fighting! Our Curator had a cordial interview with MONSIEUR JEAN PELLEGRINI, Secretary of the SYNDICAT D'INITIATIVE of Vichy. It was agreed to continue the reciprocal distribution of folders. The Curator also paid a courtesy call on MONSIEUR ETIENNE OURCEYRE, a prominent pharmacist of Vichy, who is President of the Syndicat d'Initiative. Unfortunately, MONSIEUR GASTON PEUCHET, the dynamic and devoted Technical Counsellor of the Syndicat d'Initiative was out of the city and our Curator was denied the pleasure of seeing him.

Between planes in Paris our Curator had just enough time to visit the EXPOSITION NAPOLEON at the Grand Palais, which he found truly grandiose in scope and execution. The Curator was especially pleased to see on display the well-known bust of the little King of Rome (Exhibit No. 505) from the collection of our late and lamented Honorary Committee member, PAUL FLEURIOT DE LANGLE. There was also an outstanding special exhibit at the Malmaison Museum, whose Curator, MONSIEUR GERARD HUBERT, is a former disciple of Fleuriot de Langle. But this our Curator had to forego because of lack of time.

IMPORTANT FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

In the field of public information we owe much to two very energetic organizations: the PENINSULA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE headed by IRVING L. FULLER, Executive Vice President, and the HAMPTON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, led by ANDREW D. GREENWELL. To them we express our cordial thanks for their untiring and unremitting efforts. In the field of scholarship we have more recently acquired a newer friend, RICHARD P. WEINERT. Years ago while working in the National Archives, he made a study of Fort Monroe documents. Subsequently he came to the Historical Branch, Headquarters, United States Continental Army Command, Fort Monroe. He is a frequent visitor to our Museum and we avail ourselves of his knowledge and advice.

Chester D. Bradley
Dr. Chester D. Bradley
Curator

